

AFRED Transportation Blockade Impact Monitoring Team
Situation Report – 4 February 2022, 2000

Issue/Problem:

A blockade led by truckers but involving many other vehicles and protesters is hindering the movement of goods through Alberta's busiest US border crossing in Coutts, AB. Additional blockades are said to be planned for other roads in the province throughout the week. The food supply chain is impacted in multiple ways.

The current objectives of the AFRED Transportation Blockade Impact Monitoring Team are:

1. Situation reporting
2. Monitoring impacts to the food supply chain in Alberta
3. Monitoring agriculture operational and market impacts due to transportation issues
4. Advocating for the movement of livestock through alternate US border crossings

Time frame: This team will remain in place until the transportation blockades are resolved and goods are flowing freely in all directions. If blockade impacts begin to blur into general Covid-19 pandemic impacts, the Food Supply Chain Working Group will take over monitoring and reporting.

The Food Supply Chain WG will stand down while this Incident Command Structure is in operation

Current Information

Situation Update:

Canada Freedom Convoy blockade – Updates from JSG

- The Coutts convoy response remains dynamic. The overall response to this convoy as well as potential protests in the upcoming days remain in the jurisdiction of local law enforcement and currently the RCMP is in charge of the overall response.
- February 4, 2022, JSG reported that the RCMP have been prioritizing movement of trucks impacted by the convoy that were transporting livestock or perishable goods.
 - It is believed that all trucks carrying livestock are through the convoy. It is unconfirmed whether any of the remaining impacted transports are carrying perishable goods.
- On Thursday, February 3 at 1600 JSG advised that a smaller blockade near Milk River (intersection of Highways 4 and 501) was cleared, but the situation remains dynamic.
- JSG continues to evaluate reports of expanded convoys anticipated for February 5th
- Over the last 24-48 hours, Transport Canada Civil Aviation, at the request of the RCMP, have issued the following NOTAM (Notice to Air Missions) aka restricting airspace over the protest in Coutts and the community of Milk River, AB.
- Both NOTAM's will remain in place until Wednesday, February 9, 2022 (18:30 EST)

Canada/US Border Crossings

- Coutts is Alberta's busiest land border crossing and offers 24-hour service seven days a week.
- About \$5 billion worth of Alberta exports – or about \$13 million per day on average – were shipped by truck through the Coutts border crossing in 2020.
- Coutts is the only US border crossing in Alberta providing veterinary inspection services required for international transport of live animals and inspection services for meat shipments.

- Alternate border crossings for inspection of meat shipments, which is a responsibility of the USDA Food Safety Inspection Service include:
 - Emerson MB (1303 km from Coutts)
 - Aldergrove BC (1227 km from Coutts)
- Alternate border crossings that offer inspection services for live animals, which is the responsibility of USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service include:
 - Kingsgate, BC/Eastport, Idaho (491 km from Coutts)
 - North Portal SK (864 km from Coutts)
 - Emerson MB (1303 km from Coutts)
 - Possibly Regway, SK but this has not been confirmed (792 km from Coutts)
- Further details on border services for agricultural commodities have been requested from the US Consulate in Calgary.
- As of February 3, 2022, CFIA reported to AFRED that they have been in discussions with the USDA but US Customs and Border Protection is reluctant to add additional inspection services at nearby alternate border crossings to enable transport of live animals and meat because they are viewing the current situation as a temporary protest, not a natural disaster like the BC floods.

Food Supply Chain Impacts

Produce

- Some trucks carrying produce have been diverted to smaller border crossings such as Roosville in BC
- Broader impacts to the food supply chain attributable to this event are unlikely to be measurable for another 1-2 weeks

Agriculture Operational and Market Impacts

Communication from Canadian Meat Council (CMC), February 4 2022:

- At the time of reporting, the crossing at Coutts/Sweetgrass was closed completely going south but the northbound lane was being allowed to move. *[Note: this information may no longer be current.]*
- CMC members report about 150 loads of meat have not been shipped due to concern that delays at the Coutts border crossing or the additional transport time coupled with potential delays at alternate border crossings will not allow product to reach store shelves with an adequate remaining shelf life or before it spoils (e.g. meat trimmings have only a 5 day shelf life)
- Most loads are now moving to Del Bonita which is not an authorized inspection port of entry
 - Loads crossing at Del Bonita must double back to Sweetgrass, on the US side of the Coutts border crossing, for inspection by FSIS/USDA
 - Sweetgrass inspection office has added extra staff to deal with the backlog

██████████:

- ██████ has reported that it is planning to shut down for at least one day next week due to border issues.
 - 142 truck loads of beef destined for the US have not been shipped due to same concerns identified by the CMC.
 - Inability to ship beef has resulted in reduced storage capacity in processing plants, meaning animals scheduled for slaughter are being held on feed longer than expected.

- An already low supply of feed at feedlots and the need to keep more animals on feed longer than planned is forcing them to ration the feed on site.
- Other feedlot operators are reporting very serious grain shortages, which started with the drought and is now compounded by the BC floods and the blockade.
- The Alberta Cattle Feeders Association, Alberta Beef Producers and Canadian Cattlemen's Association have publically stated their significant concerns with supply chain challenges, including the need to access to feed from the US.

Cattle Market Update:

- Canfax reported that the feedlot inventories are trending less current, meaning that the supply of market-ready fed cattle is growing. Lower fed cattle prices are anticipated next week if processing plants cannot increase harvest rates.
- Canfax did not report a price for fed steers for the week of February 4, 2022. However, there was a price reported for fed heifers at \$158.27 per hundredweight, which is down \$2.08 per hundredweight from last week.
- For the week ending January 29, 2022, Western Canadian federally inspected fed cattle slaughter was 45,964 head. This was up by 3,541 head from the week before. YTD total cattle slaughter in Western Canada is running 2.0 per cent below 2021. *[Note: Slaughter data for the week ending February 5, 2022, should be available February 10, 2022.]*
- Compared to last week, heavier weight feeder cattle were down between one and five dollars per hundredweight, while lighter weight feeder cattle were down about two dollars per hundredweight for the week ending February 4, 2022.
- Overall, market fluctuations are not out of the ordinary, so it is unclear if there is a relationship to the border situation.

Actions anticipated for next period/day

- Remain in contact with the CFIA and other agencies and departments
- Monitor the effect of the blockade on Alberta meat facilities and feedlots
- The next Situation Report will be NOON, February 7, 2022. Significant updates will be provided by email if necessary before that date.

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